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NATURE PRESERVE AND STATE PARK



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CONSERVATION



THE PARK

Beall Woods Nature Preserve and State Park is 6 miles south of Mt. Carmel near Keensburg off Route 1. This tract had previously remained in the ownership of the Beall family for over 102 years. After the death of Miss Laura Beall, the property was sold to a man who allegedly intended to clear the land of trees and farm the property. The interest and efforts of many individuals and organizations helped to create the original acquisition.

The area was purchased by the State of Illinois in 1965 by evoking the law of eminent domain against an unwilling seller in order to preserve the virgin woodland for posterity. The state received a grant from the Federal Land and Water Conservation fund to help defray the cost of the 635¹ acre area including the timberland.

HISTORY

Once the entire eastern United States was covered with forest much like Beall Woods. The primeval woodland helps us to recapture the everlasting forest influence that shaped our nation's ancestors and their destiny. John Audubon traveled near here a few miles to the east in Indiana. George Rogers Clark and his hardy band suffered incredible hardships while crossing similar woodlands not far to the north under terrible flooded winter conditions. As a young man Robert Ridgeway, a great American ornithologist, roamed this area.

Of the original deciduous forests remaining in the United States, Beall Woods is one of the largest single tracts left relatively untouched by man east of the Mississippi. The stand has



several distinct forest sites ranging from well drained, rolling uplands to low areas that are subject to frequent flooding and standing water. This diversity of sites has produced a surprising number of tree species; sixty¹ four have been identified and there is reason to believe that more will be discovered. State champions include the Shumard red oak, green ash, sugarberry and sweet gum. Approximately 300 trees, all with trunks greater than 30 inches at breast height, grow here.

The Illinois Department of Conservation is well aware of this natural jewel that was placed in its care. Much of the former farmland around the forest has been planted to native hardwood species to provide a natural buffer for the forest.

National Landmark: Because of its unique character, Beall Woods is registered as a National Landmark by the United States and listed in the United States Register of Natural Landmarks as the "Forest of the Wabash." The 270¹ acre primeval woodland bordering on the Wabash river was dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve to insure that this forest will remain in its natural condition for the people to enjoy forever.

Sometimes acclaimed the "University of Trees," Beall Woods is more than a collection of super-sized deciduous trees. It is a living forest community—a natural ecological system, containing all the native plant and animal life. Quiet hikers may be rewarded by a quick glimpse of a red fox, a deer, a raccoon or a pileated woodpecker. The forest floor, quite dim under summer's lush foliage, supports a variety of interesting flowers.

FACILITIES

There are picnic tables, park stoves and a playground area provided. Adequate parking is available. There is no camping at Beall Woods. A boat launch is located on the lake. Only trolling motors may be used.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash. No pets are allowed within the Nature Preserve boundaries.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette and Giant City; Cave-In-Rock, White Pines Forest has cabins and dining rooms only, and Black Hawk has dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact Site Superintendent, Beall Woods Conservation Area, R.R. 2, Mt. Carmel, Illinois 62863, phone 618/298 1 2442. For information on other land areas write the Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Lands, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706.

THE TRAILS

Red Barn: The remodeled barn serves as the nature center with displays of seeds, native woods of Illinois, Indian arrowheads and other items pertaining to the area. Several miles of nature trails start here, where simple interpretive signs reveal the forest community to the hiker. Nothing is disturbed. Poison ivy vines, with their luxuriant growth of lethal leaves, encourage the hikers to stay on the trails. Visitors would be wise to protect themselves with mosquito repellent. Please be extremely careful with fire and litter.

White Oak Trail: This 1½ mile trail offers the greatest variety of vegetation and forest condi-

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tions. With the exception of several steep slopes, it is easy walking and offers a good general orientation to the woods. It passes over five soil types, through good examples of upland and bottomland forest and passes a field demonstration of reforestation.

Tulip Tree Trail: An upland forest trail, Tulip Tree follows for 1½ miles the edge of a small rock cliff created by Coffee Creek. It is a wide trail especially suitable for small groups and interesting in the fall for its foliage colors.

Sweet Gum Trail: A portion of this bottomland forest 1½ mile trail follows Coffee Creek across from an interesting rock cliff. During rainy periods several small creeks create small waterfalls. Many plants adapted to the cool, moist and shady conditions thrive here. This bottomland forest trail is level and easy to walk except during wet periods.

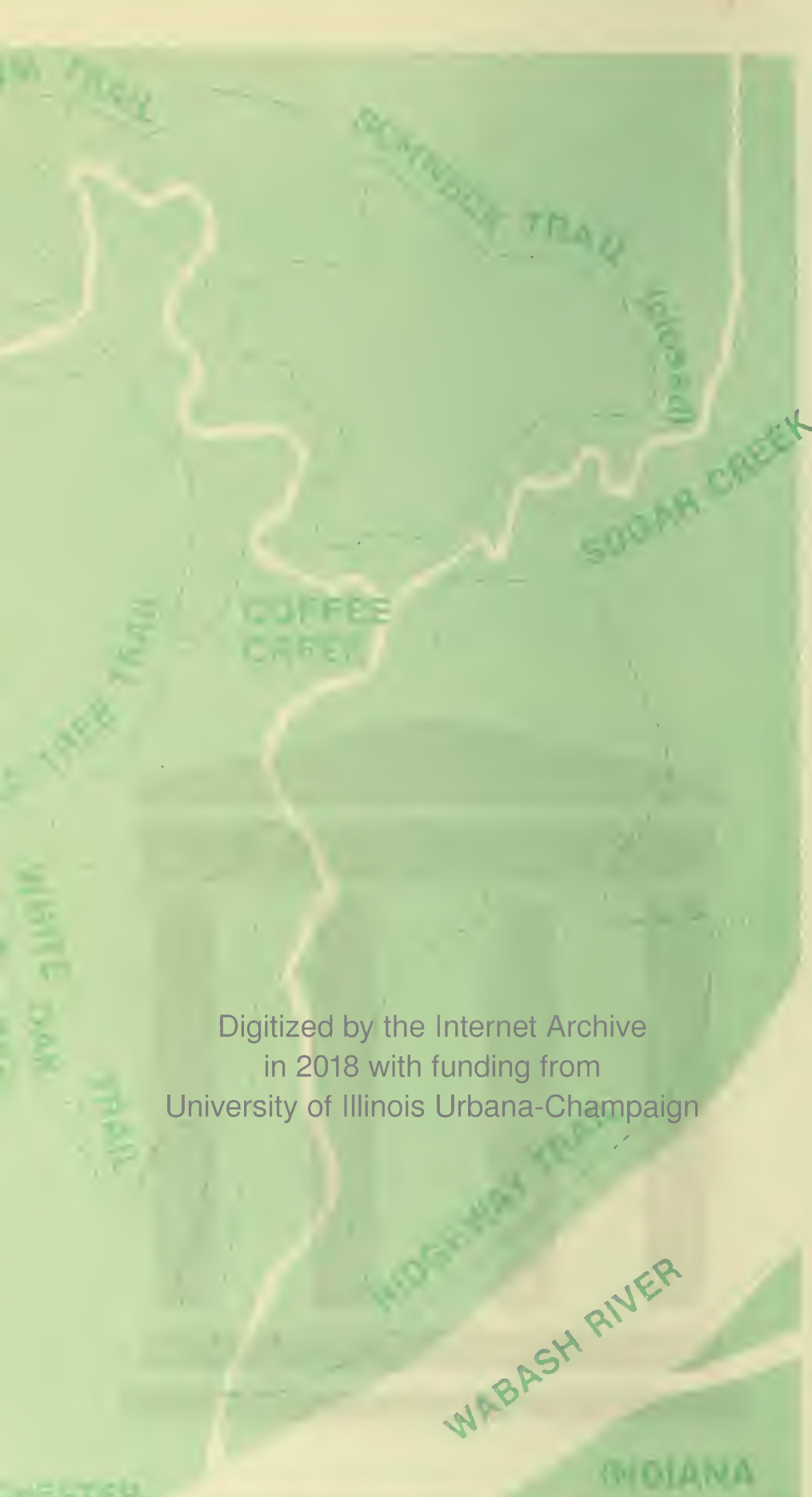
Ridgeway Trail: This 1¾ mile trail is a living memorial to Rober Ridgeway, one of America's foremost ornithologists, who spent his boyhood in this area. The trail is identified by a Cardinal, the Illinois state bird. It borders a large field which has been reforested with sycamore, cottonwood, sweet gum and cypress trees. The hiker goes through several pecan groves as well as an opening with Kentucky Coffee trees.

Schneck Trail: This 2½ mile trail is a living memorial to a pioneer Mt. Carmel physician and botanist, Dr. Jacob Schneck. It is now closed for use as a wildlife refuge.

Trees, like people, have their own characteristics and habits. But all trees make a major contribution to the natural beauty of the American landscape. They are living examples of the three basic concepts of beauty — variety, harmony and contrast.

For information on other sites, write the Illinois Department of Conservation, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, Illinois 62706.





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